

Remarks

Claims 1, 2 and 14 have been amended. Claims 1-2, 4-8, 10, 13-16 and 18-20 remain.

All claims 1-2, 4-8, 10, 13-16 and 18-20 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,516,000 B1 (Kshirsagar *et al.*) in view of US 6,295,276 B1 (Datta *et al.*).

The basis for the rejection is that, as stated in the “Response to Arguments” section of the Office Action, “the examiner views mapping ATM VCI to MAC address and vice versa in the bridge as the method replacing MAC address with ATM address (VCI) and vice versa”.

However, “mapping” is not the same as “replacing”. In the ATM system referenced in Kshirsagar, the entire IP data packet, including MAC addresses for both source and destination devices, is transported within the ATM layer without alteration. In the PLC method of Applicant’s invention, the MAC addresses are removed and replaced with a ConnectionID. Independent claims 1 and 14 have been amended to clarify this point by stating that the method includes “*removing* the source MAC address and destination MAC address from the MAC header and *inserting* into the MAC header a ConnectionID, the ConnectionID identifying the PLC MAC bridging device’s TEI and the PLC destination station’s TEF” (italics added). The result is that in Applicant’s invention, there is a reduction in overhead in sending the data packets over the PLC LAN. (Specification, page 4, lines 14-16).

The Office Action also states that Kshirsagar teaches “providing a PLC central coordinator (CRP server, 203)” and “assigning a temporary- equipment identifier (TEI) (*IP address*) for each PLC station and PLC MAC bridging device.” (Office Action, paragraph 2, lines 9-15) (italics added). However, it is well known that IP addresses must be assigned by an administrator. That is because an IP address is global in nature and will be known to user applications. Connection-oriented networks (specifically ATM) are on the internet backbone where IP addresses need to be globally unique and are not assigned by the ATM equipment. This is explained in Kshirsagar at col. 7, lines 28-36:

“Another aspect of the implementation is the method by which the CRP server 203 *acquires the connectionless (e.g., IP) address* to ATM address mappings for all hosts in its domain. We assume that in *the registration procedure used by the hosts*, entries are created in this mapping table.” (italics added)

The important point is that in Kshirsagar the IP address is *acquired*, not *assigned* by the CRP server 203. Applicant’s amended independent claims 1 and 14 require “*assigning by the PLC central coordinator a temporary equipment identifier (TEI) for each PLC station and PLC MAC bridging device*”.

In view of the above discussion and amendments to independent claims 1 and 14, Applicant’s invention is now believed distinguishable over Kshirsagar and Datta, either alone or in combination.

Applicant believes all remaining claims are now in condition for allowance. The Examiner may call Applicant’s attorney if a telephone conference will expedite the prosecution of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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